

THE
PARENT'S FRIEND;

A MANUEL OF
Morison
DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION AND DISCIPLINE.

BY
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PAIR," &c., &c.

"I will pour my spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine
offspring."

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PREFACE.

THE blessing which has attended the publication of several of the Author's former little works, emboldened him in laying this additional effort of his pen before the Christian public.

He has long wished to do something for the benefit of the domestic relations; and, should the "Parent's Friend" be kindly received, he intends following it up, if life be spared, at no distant period, with "The Child's Friend," "The Master's Friend," and "The Servant's Friend."

PREFACE.

That the 'first publication' in this series may prove a blessing to many an anxious father and mother, is the fervent prayer of him, who desires no greater happiness on earth, than that he may prove himself the Parent's Friend.



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THE
PARENT'S FRIEND.

PART I.
INTRODUCTORY APPEAL TO PARENTS.

As a parent myself, deeply feeling the weight of responsibility attaching to my own position, I would willingly contribute my humble mite of influence to aid other parents in the conscientious discharge of their duties to their offspring.

Having felt the difficulty of acting for God and eternity in this matter, I am prepared to sympathize with others who have felt a similar pressure. But if a sense of my own short-coming teaches me to write with a feeling of becoming diffidence, it also prompts

to lay open defects in the religious economy of professing families, for the purpose of preventing others from committing the same mistakes.

As it will be my main object to fix upon the conscience the authority of God's holy word; and as I shall adopt no means to accomplish this object, not directly or indirectly sanctioned by that pure and infallible standard, I trust I may be forgiven if I bespeak the prayerful and candid attention of every parent into whose hands this little volume may find its way. Conscious only of a desire to raise the standard of parental qualification, and thereby to advance the prosperity of the church and the salvation of the world, I can never regret the present attempt, whatever may be the measure of success with which it may please God, in his sovereign arrangements, to accompany it.

Allow me then to say, in the opening of this little treatise, that if God has made you a

parent, he has devolved a responsibility upon you, surpassed by that of no other human tie. In that solemn position which you now occupy, you have become the source either of unnumbered blessings, or of accumulated evils; and this not only to one living family, but, it may be, to generations yet unborn. Who can fully estimate the effects, for good or evil, of the culture adopted with that *one darling child*! Whether he is to be a blessing or a curse to the world—whether he is to cheer and solace your declining years, or to embitter the closing scene of your earthly pilgrimage—must in a great measure depend, under God, upon the views which you take of your exact position as a parent, and the methods which you adopt for instilling right principles into his mind. True, indeed, the best efforts may fail in leading your child to God; but if, through your negligence or wrong plans of action, he should swell the ranks of the impenitent, and become the

Centre of an injurious influence to mankind, the responsibility of his ruin and misery, and contagious example, will lie for ever at your door.

O what need, then, is there for copious showers of divine grace upon your heart, that you may feel as a parent ought to feel, and that the blood of souls may not be laid to your charge in the great day of final account!

You cannot, I am fully persuaded, wish to add to the number of those parents, already fearfully multiplied, who have no impressive sense of their duty to God and their offspring. How many, alas! have been called to sustain the parental relation, who are lamentably defective in all the best qualifications for the due discharge of its solemn trusts. They are not strangers, indeed, to those tender ties which bind them to their offspring, as inhabitants of earth; but they have never learned to look upon them as candidates for eternity, nor has the feeling of compassion

for their immortal souls given any direct or palpable bias to their modes of daily culture and superintendence. A regard to present and passing interests robs the souls of their hapless offspring of all that anxious and spiritual care which they so much need, and to which, from a parent, they are entitled by the laws of their being, as well as by all the express sanctions of religion.

The consequences, immediate and remote, arising from parental neglect in the great matter of religious training, are of a description so affecting and injurious, that the heart is wrung with torturing reflections in thinking of a race of young immortals, from whose education the thought of God and eternity has been well nigh excluded.

How incalculably important, then, to the interests of society, would be an increase of piety in the heads of families; since nothing short of this could secure for the rising generation that assiduous attention to their

spiritual interests, without which they will only be trained, at best, for splendid ruin!

Look at the condition and prospects of any child, no matter in what grade of society, on whose sphere of mental discipline the great principles of the gospel exert no palpable or salutary control. How little is there to hope religiously about such a child! Corruption is deeply seated in the heart; but there is nothing in the influences which bear upon it, to counteract its growth, or to supersede its fatal dominion. On the contrary, a *worldly education*, proceeding, as it always does, upon the erroneous supposition, that human nature is radically good till perverted by the contagion of evil example, has no power or virtue in it, however well conducted, to implant right principles, or to lead to any permanently satisfactory results. Vanity, pride, selfishness, or even baser passions, are the natural, not to say necessary, effects, of any system of domestic train-

ing in which an unequivocal homage is not paid to the great and holy principles of revealed truth. And such a homage will never be conscientiously paid where the mind of the parent is not enlightened and sanctified by divine grace. If, then, God has made you a parent, O see to it that you are not destitute of the primary qualification for the vigorous discharge of your religious duty to your offspring. And in what shall that qualification be fixed? Can lower ground be taken than your own *personal* and *sincere* Christianity? How can you properly estimate the souls of your children, if you have not been taught the value of your own soul? How can you be in earnest that they should be saved, if you are not saved yourself? How can you talk to them persuasively of the love of Christ, if that divine affection is a stranger to your own bosom? How can you train them to feel and acknowledge the vanity of the world, if your whole conduct

proves that it is the idol and the object of your pursuit? How can you teach them to pray, if you are yourself estranged from communion with Heaven? It is most certain that you must be a sincere and fervent Christian yourself, if you would hope to be the instrument of conveying spiritual light and life to your beloved offspring.

Let the fact, then, that you *are* a parent, and that you *are* chargeable with such a measure of concern for the spiritual welfare of your children, as may reasonably tend to their true conversion to God, induce you to pause, and reflect upon your real state and prospects for eternity. It may be that a faithful investigation of character will bring you to the conclusion that you are not a Christian. But how much better will it be to know and feel this, than to proceed onward in a course of self-deception, which may peril alike your own salvation and that of your offspring. It is the first step towards

becoming a true Christian, to know that you are not one. • A discovery like this, will create a salutary conviction of sin, will prompt you to cry to God for renewing and pardoning mercy, and will urge your approach to that compassionate Redeemer who rejects none who apply to him. •

And, oh, with what new energy will you address yourself to your parental duties, when once you have tasted that the Lord is gracious! What a wide sphere of interesting action will then open to your view! Your child will be seen by you in the light of judgment and eternity, and you will feel that to “save a soul from death, and to hide a multitude of sins,” is the noblest exercise of benevolence to which you can devote the entire resources of your parental character. In the single qualification of sincere and devoted piety, you will be in possession of a rule of conduct, in the training and discipline of your family, applicable to every

individual case; while, in the spirit of devout prayer and dependence upon God, you may confidently expect the bestowment of that wisdom which is so necessary to guide your steps in the effort to promote the salvation of those who are dear to you as your own soul.

But though it cannot be denied, that the religious advantages afforded by pious parents to their children, are, in almost all cases, greatly superior to those enjoyed by the children of parents not influenced by divine grace; yet, I would by no means be understood to affirm, that all professing heads of families, or even a majority of them, are as exemplary as they ought to be, in the momentous task of training up a seed for God. Too many, alas! who bear the Christian name, are but slenderly alive to the authority of Heaven, and the highest welfare of the children whom God has given them. Hence, (without taking selfish refuge in the doctrine

of Divine sovereignty) the sad disorder and impiety, but too manifest among the younger branches of some families professing godliness. Hence the stumbling-block thrown in the way of those who might hopefully be acted upon by the appeals of the christian pulpit, but for the sad failures of children who had a *nominal* religious training. I will not say, with the immortal Baxter, that if religious parents were found diligent and faithful in the performance of their parental duties, few conversions might be expected to take place under the ministry of the word; but this I will say, that if christian parents were zealously and unitedly to strive for the salvation of their offspring, the number of *family* conversions would be greatly multiplied. The divinely appointed ordinance of domestic instruction and discipline, yields in importance and utility to no institution under heaven, save that of the ministry of reconciliation; and an attentive examination of

the facts and doctrines both of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, will show, that the two great ordinances have an intimate relation to each other, and that it was the design of God that the tender pleadings of parental love and piety should prepare the way for an enlightened and devout submission of mind and heart, to the more public and pledging ordinances of the church.

Oh, if parents would look upon themselves as divinely appointed auxiliaries to those who are set over them in the Lord; if they would watch for the souls of their children as those who must give account; if they would steadily, in the use of proper means, keep in view the delightful hour when it might be their privilege to say to the minister of Christ, "This is my dear child, for whom I have 'travailed' as in birth, that Christ might be formed in him the hope of glory;" and now I bring him to you, that you may introduce him, as 'a babe in Christ,' to

the fellowship of God's house ;"—if parents, I say, would thus feel and act, might we not hope to see in every family, pledged to the Christian profession, a nursery for the church—a school for heaven?

As there is reason to believe that many parents fail to do justice to the spiritual interests of their children, for the want of a properly matured plan, it does not seem to be a superfluous task, even after all that has been written on this momentous topic, to sketch the outline of a method of parental instruction and discipline, which, if followed out in the spirit of earnest prayer, may conduct, in many a household, to the most beneficial results.

Oh, if I could penetrate my readers, by the Divine blessing, with a sense of the great need of dependence upon God in the all-important work of conducting the religious education of children, how much should I then be led to hope from the perusal of

“The Parent’s Friend!” Remember, you are engaged in an undertaking for which all human skill and energy are, in themselves, utterly inadequate. You are striving to rear, from broken, disjointed, and unsightly materials, a temple in which the spotless Majesty of heaven may take up an eternal residence; you are endeavouring to polish those precious jewels which shall sparkle through endless years in the mediatorial crown of your glorious Redeemer; you are struggling to subvert the throne of Satan in the hearts of your children, and to set up that “kingdom which is peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost;” you are, in one word, aiming to transform those who have “borne the image of the earthly,” into the likeness of Him, who is “the first-born among many brethren, and to whom all the members of his mystical body are destined to a complete and eternal conformity.

Engage, then, in your arduous but delight-

ful enterprise with just and impressive views of your own insufficiency. *You can as little convert your child as create a world!* But there are certain means which God has prescribed to parents for the conversion of their children, in the use of which, with arduous and self-renunciation, they are warranted to anticipate the most joyful results. Think it not an improbable thing that your feeble endeavours should be crowned with success. "God hath chosen the weak things, to confound the things which are mighty;" and never will you be so powerful in accomplishing his self-abasing purposes, as when you feel that you *are* nothing, and can *do* nothing, without the continual aid of his omnipotent grace.

But, oh, never suffer the doctrine of efficacious grace to lull your spiritual anxieties and holy efforts for the eternal welfare of your offspring; but rather, in as much as God has reserved to himself the power that

can effectually move the hearts of your children, let the thought of almighty and everlasting strength stimulate your zeal, and nerve your holy determination. Forget not, that your responsibility, in the use of means, is as complete and unimpaired as if it belonged to you to inspire your children's hearts with the admiration of all that is pure, and lovely, and ennobling in the religion of Christ.

PART II.

EVILS TO BE AVOIDED IN THE RELIGIOUS
TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

THAT evils of a very formidable kind do often interpose their baneful influence, and hinder the effect of an otherwise well-intentioned process of domestic training, will not be questioned by any accurate observer of human nature. It is indispensable that parents should be aware of such evils, and, so far as possible, avoid them, if they would expect to see their parental efforts conducted to a successful issue.

Whatever tends to lower the standard of a parent's character in the estimate of a child, or to confuse its notions of right and wrong, ought carefully to be shunned by every one who would hope, through the medium of a

system of means, to produce a salutary impression upon the observant and inquisitive minds of children. Any one who has looked with an intelligent eye on passing events, must have seen many things in Christian families greatly calculated to impede, if not utterly to frustrate, the holy process of a religious education. It may not, therefore, be improper, in an early part of this little manual, to point out a few of those evils against which every parent must strenuously guard, who hopes to conduct his children to the feet of the lowly Saviour.

CHAP. I

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST BE CAREFUL TO AVOID OPPOSING, OR EVEN DIFFERENT, METHODS OF GOVERNMENT.

Where husband and wife are unequally yoked, that is, where one is a Christian and the other an unbeliever, it may be next to

impossible for the converted party to secure attention to this rule. But even in such cases, it should be uniformly aimed at, as a thing indispensable to the spiritual welfare of the rising generation. Sacrifices ought to be made of every thing but principle, in order to hide from the minds of children discrepancies of plan in the great and serious business of conducting their education.

Where the husband and wife are one in the Lord, it must be the grievous fault of one, or the other, or both, if they do not succeed in pursuing a uniform method in the training and government of their children. As all variance between husband and wife is much to be deprecated, and is exceedingly inconsistent with the spirit and precepts of the gospel; so, differences, in particular, on the subject of the religious culture of their children, are peculiarly injurious. Nothing will be done to purpose, in fixing right principles in the minds of young people, if one

parent is found counteracting the plans of another, or if such serious differences are found to exist between husband and wife, as to destroy the harmony of the domestic circle. Whether instruction or discipline is aimed at, it is necessary to success, that the child should be conscious that he is subjected to the united will of his parents, that there is union and affectionate co-operation in all their efforts for his good.

If an opposite course is adopted, no lesson of instruction, and no act of discipline, will produce the legitimate impression. The mind of the child will be distracted by conflicting emotions, one parent will be regarded as in the right, and the other as in the wrong; and the result will inevitably be, that parental authority will fall into contempt, and, with it, one of the best safeguards of the rising generation.

To guard against so great an evil, let husband and wife learn to cultivate, with grow-

ing assiduity, the duties which severally belong to them in the endearing relation in which they stand to each other. A cheerful submission of their minds to the authority of God's word will not only harmonize, but invigorate all their plans for the proper culture of their offspring. But whatever difference of opinion they may at any time entertain upon subjects connected with the mental or moral improvement of their children, let reason, and common sense, and conscience, induce them to conceal the discrepancy from those who would be injured by the avowal of it; and let their offspring have all the benefit arising from the conviction, that their parents are one in all arrangements in which their interests are materially concerned.

Oh, if parents would remember how contentions and strifes of all kinds tend to injure their children, to pervert their dispositions, and vitiate their hearts, how anxious would they be to walk in love one toward another,

and to cultivate all those gentle affections which tend to cement the love of their offspring, and to preserve the permanent union and harmony of families. Let husbands and wives remember the scriptural maxim, that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

CHAP. II.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS SHOULD AVOID THE VERY SERIOUS EVIL OF NEGLECTING THE EARLY ADOPTION OF A RIGHT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

It is a fatal mistake to suppose, that very young children are better not to be teased with rules of discipline and government. A neglected and perverse child will but too generally grow up in despite of all subsequently established methods of control. Evil dispositions, and undutiful tempers, if not checked in their first developements, will speedily acquire a formidable maturity, which no pa-

rental skill or energy will be able to subdue. The wayward wretch of the nursery will soon prove himself to be the lawless, ungovernable, and mischievous tyrant of the parlour: and he whose infant years have been left to luxuriate in rebellion and self-will, may be expected to grow up a plague and disgrace to his parents, a deadly injury to society, an outcast from the wise and good, and a hardened rebel against the government of God.

To be effectual, family discipline must commence with the very dawns of reason. The first observations of a child should convince it that its parents are destined to guide its course, that they are pleased by being obeyed, and are pained by an opposite course. In the very smallest matters, as well as in those which are more important, parental authority must be maintained; and in this way alone can it be hoped that the true principles of obedience will be established in the heart.

Uniformity of conduct, from the earliest periods, in upholding that authority which reason and scripture have alike conierred upon the parental character, may be expected, in ordinary cases, to do much in laying the foundation of correct habits in the minds of the young. Let authority, indeed, be exercised with a due mixture of mildness and affection; let reason and conscience regulate every limitation of the infant will; but let no instance of deliberate rebellion be tolerated, let the parent show that he will be obeyed; and let him persevere in his determination till unresisting submission shall be the rule of the family.

By pursuing this course, in a devout and prayerful frame of mind, children will learn to be dutiful, affectionate, and obliging in their conduct; and self-will being dethroned, they will escape the innumerable mortifications to which it conducts; will learn to act on conscience, and not on mere impulse;

will be protected from many of the follies and vices of youth; will grow up in habits of modesty and virtue, industry and religion; will be held in esteem by all who know how to value real worth; and will be trained to habits of submission to the ordinances of God, which, by his promised blessing, will impress a character of wisdom, purity, and happiness upon them, both for time and eternity. It is thus that children will be taught to regard their parents' will as the rule of their conduct, and will not ordinarily seek to deviate from it; and it is thus no less that their true happiness will be promoted, by teaching them to seek enjoyment only in the path of duty and obedience. The disorder and misery of those families, in which the wayward inclinations of children are not checked and restrained by wholesome and well-adjusted rules of discipline, are inconceivably great; and to the neglect of the early assertion of parental authority

may be traced a large proportion of those vices which disturb the peace of families, and defy the introduction of any well-regulated forms of domestic rule at a later period.

CHAP. III.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST BE CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY THING THAT WOULD INDICATE A WANT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

I would be far from inculcating upon parents an unnatural repose, in conducting the discipline of their families. When a child has offended, the looks, gestures, and tones of voice of the parent ought to indicate to the transgressor that real offence has been given, and real pain inflicted. It would be actually injurious to reprove or chastise a child in a perfectly unruffled tone and temper of mind.

But the main difficulty here will not be likely to arise from excess of calmness, but from undue perturbation, and a forgetfulness of that self-government so essential in all attempts to rectify the errors of the young. A passionate mode of reproving or correcting children will in general lead to the very worst results. The moment a parent is looked upon as a tyrant, he will cease to be an object of veneration and love. Violence and rage will divert the mind of a child from the serious consideration of its own guilt, and will inevitably fix its attention upon the infirmity of the parent. The effect of which will be, to prevent the exercise of any thing like salutary comp^osition, and to pave the way for fresh deviations from the path of obedience. A wise and pious parent ought never to allow himself to be transported into paroxysms of undue warmth in chiding the faults, or even vices, of his child; but ought to be anxious that his resentments should

ever be proportioned to the nature of the offence committed.

These remarks will particularly hold in reference to minor offences. It is the marked infirmity of some parents to suffer their anger to rise to the highest pitch of excitement upon the most trifling occasions. The merest accident will rouse them to a feeling of intense indignation; while, with singular inconsistency, they will suffer offences of the gravest character, such as insolence, lying, equivocation, and profaneness, to pass unpunished. This is a sad proof of the want of settled principles in the government of children, and of the absence of that self-control which gives to judicious parents all the benefit of a moral ascendancy over the minds of their offspring. Discipline, conducted under the mere impulse of excitement and passion, and which is sure always to be extremely fitful, has a direct tendency to spoil the tempers of children, to weaken,

if not subvert, parental authority, and consequently to injure and destroy the moral feelings. "Be ye angry, and sin not," is a precept of scripture which parents do well steadfastly to remember, in maintaining the government of their families.

It is only "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" which are suited to the genius of a house professing godliness; and if these are exchanged for unsanctified rage and mere brute control, we need not wonder if the children of such parents should become "sons of Belial."

It is indeed a delightful circumstance, when parents are enabled to steer the happy medium between laxity on the one hand, and unreasonable severity on the other; when principle, not passion, gives law to their conduct; when their government is strictly paternal; when obedience is secured without depressing the feelings of love and reverence in the mind of the child; and when the

entire effect of the discipline established is to make sin hateful, and obedience a source of real pleasure and delight.

CHAP. IV.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS OUGHT CAREFULLY TO
AVOID PARTIALITY.

It may be very difficult to regard this rule in all cases, even where no wrong bias exists in the mind of the parent. Some children are so affectionate and engaging, as compared with others, that, to avoid showing a marked preference for them, requires no ordinary share of prudence and watchfulness. It would seem, too, that amiable tempers and good conduct, in all cases, deserve to be approved and rewarded; and it must surely be painful to the mind of a generous parent to withhold from a child, justly beloved, any reasonable mark of parental regard.

In urging, therefore, upon parents the duty of avoiding dangerous partialities in the treatment of their children, I would not be understood as condemning the discreet commendation of real excellence in the young. This would be to deprive the infant mind of one of the main stimulants to good; it would be wrong in principle, and mischievous in practice. A child evincing good conduct, and pious habits, ought to be distinguished from one whose behaviour is rebellious, and whose tempers are vicious and depraved.

But it too often happens that the fond partialities of parents are but too little regulated by moral and religious considerations. They are rather workings of nature than of grace; and so far as they are so, they are strikingly injurious to the best interests of children.

The evils arising from an indiscreet partiality are many and formidable. It is quite

certain that the little favourite will become an object of envy and hatred to his brothers and sisters; and it is more than likely, too, that the unhappy fondling will often be indulged and humoured to a criminal extent. A favourite child, like Joseph of old, has often been the occasion of most criminal jealousy to his brethren; and some of the worst passions of our fallen nature have been called into destructive operation by the indiscreet attachments of unthinking parents. "I would rather," said Dr. Johnson, "have the rod to be a general terror to all, to make them learn, than to tell a child, 'If you do thus or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters. By exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundation of a lasting mischief. You make brothers and sisters hate each other.'*" The miscarriages and faults of a

* See Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 2d ed. p. 103.

favourite child are in danger of being overlooked, or mistaken for virtues; till at length it becomes a trial and a curse in the family, and is at last plunged into inextricable ruin, by the folly and indiscretion of the parent.

Add to all this, the solemn fact, that such unreasonable partiality tends to discourage the other children in a house; so that they may be expected to become utterly careless whether they please or offend, and will assuredly cease to endeavour to excel. Despairing of securing the equal affection and confidence of their parents, however much they may struggle to compete with the settled pet of the family; a sullen pride and jealousy will seize upon their whole nature; and thus, instead of peace, order, and harmony subsisting in the domestic circle, nothing but anarchy, hatred, confusion, and every evil work, can reasonably be looked for.

Partiality and favouritism ought, then, to be religiously guarded against, in every de-

partment of a parent's conduct, if he would not be accessory to the ruin of his offspring. In the matter of dress, in personal treatment, in the respective means of intellectual improvement, and in the property ultimately bequeathed, there ought to be as strict a regard as possible to impartiality, or the most formidable results may be anticipated.

Before quitting this important branch of my subject, I cannot forbear hinting, with delicacy and kindness, that where second marriages occur, and a second family rises up, the utmost prudence and watchfulness will be necessary in guarding against those exhibitions of favouritism which are so injurious, and so much to be condemned. No one ought to consent to occupy the place of a step-mother or step-father, who is not prepared to do justice to the children whose parent slumbers in the dust. It is a great cruelty to undertake the responsibilities of a parent, without being prepared to regard

them in the light of a sacred and religious trust. It has fallen to my lot to witness sad competitions between first and second families; I am therefore prompted, with the more earnestness, to warn thoughtful and judicious parents against an evil of by no means rare occurrence, and to which they will be peculiarly exposed, unless they are doubly watchful. When they have done their utmost, so far as their own counsel and example may be concerned, they may find it difficult in the extreme to prevent painful jealousies from arising. For their own conduct, however, they are responsible to God and their offspring; and if they are anxiously watchful against all sinful partialities, they may reasonably hope that their children will grow up in the exercise of mutual esteem and regard.

If parents would but call to remembrance how many *favourite* sons and daughters have become the sport of misfortune and calamity,

how eagerly would they guard against every thing in their domestic government calculated, in the slightest degree, to vitiate the principles, and to wreck the prospects, of their endeared offspring.

Contemplating the mournful history of domestic partialities, so far at least as they have come under my own immediate observation, I should be disposed to regard them as among the most prolific sources of strife in families, and ultimate profligacy in children.

I shall be pardoned, perhaps, if I hint to mothers, that they are in peculiar danger from the susceptibility of their nature, of falling into the error of partiality. But let them remember, that no mistake into which they can fall in the training of their offspring will be more likely than this, to imbitter the peace and happiness of their future days. An over-indulged son will be the last in a family to cultivate those delicate attentions to her, who gave him birth, which constitute

the peculiar solace of the maternal bosom. Nor is this all; for every act of over-indulgence may be expected to tell upon the general depravation of character, and to lay the foundation for those disruptions of parental authority, which may issue in open and avowed depravity.

CHAP. V.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENT

VERY FORMIDABLE EVIL OF TRIFLING WITH THEIR WORD.

As a love of truth is the parent of almost all the social virtues in the mind of a child, it should be the anxious endeavour of parents to cultivate this lovely feature in the characters of their offspring. For this purpose, an open and ingenuous disposition ought ever to be encouraged, while habits of concealment should be marked by some special tokens of dis-pleasure. An ingenuous child should

profit by frank disclosures, even where some measure of delinquency may thereby be brought to light. The loveliness of truth ought frequently to be set forth by some familiar illustrations; while the depravity of falsehood and equivocation should be portrayed in all their most formidable and disgusting characters.

There must be nothing in a parent's intercourses with his children, to forbid or discourage frank disclosure. All distance, reserve, severity, and coldness must be avoided, if filial confidence is to be inspired. Let it be the understood rule of the family, that any thing in the shape of falsehood from the lips of a child will occasion the greatest distress, and will involve the severest chastisement.

The exaggerations of lively and imaginative children must be watched over, and, if possible, corrected. They are of the nature of a deviation from the strict line of

truth, and, when indulged for any lengthened period of time, blunt the edge of conscience, and pave the way for more serious departures from the path of duty. I need not say that this process of tutoring the young mind will be altogether powerless and unavailing, unless the motives of religion are fully plied on the conscience. The omniscience, holiness, truth, and goodness of God must be appealed to, no less than the odiousness of falsehood, and the loveliness and respectability of truth.

But parents must never forget that children must be taught to venerate truth by the force of a well-sustained and consistent example. The inculcation of truth will fall with but slender force upon the conscience of a child, if the parent is not himself a living comment on the fitness and beauty of his own cherished counsels. One of the surest methods of training children to the love of truth, is the rigid practice of it, on the part

of parents, in all their transactions with their rising offspring. Promises and threatenings must be made with due deliberation and care; but, once issued, they must be regarded as sacred things, unless it shall be found that they were made in error; in which case, full explanation of the fact ought instantly to be made. Children must never be deceived, in a single instance, if they are to be trained up in the love of truth. If any favour or reward is promised them, it must be faithfully bestowed; or if any threatening of punishment, for wrong conduct, proceeds from a parent's lips, it must be carried into effect, even to the very letter.

It is very obvious, then, that nothing wrong must either be promised or threatened to children. As a sinful declaration cannot be lawfully fulfilled, so it can never be reasonably made. There is a rash and heedless mode of conduct adopted by some parents, in this matter, most deeply to be deplored.

Promises and threatenings with them are workings of impulse and passion, rather than of deliberation and principle. They promise, without intending it as the reward of right conduct; and they threaten, without intending to fulfil their rash menace.

The following anecdote, related by a truly judicious and pious parent, will illustrate the truth of these remarks.

“My little boy,” said he, “about five years of age, being at play with a neighbour’s boy about six years of age, this neighbour’s child, having been guilty of some transgression, the mother threatened him in language to this effect:—‘Sirrah, I’ll knock your brains out, *that* I will.’ Upon hearing this, my little boy came home exceedingly terrified, and, with tears in his eyes, addressed himself to his mother, and said, ‘Mamma, S. S. is to have his brains knocked out?’ To this his mother replied, ‘Dear child, what do you talk about? I hope nothing so

dreadful will happen to him.' To which he answered, 'But, mamma, his mother told him that she would knock his brains out;' and this idea seemed to possess the child's mind so fully, that he could not be persuaded to think that the mother of S. S. would falsify her word; for he had no conception of a person saying what was not meant to be done; as he had never noticed such conduct in his own parents, and therefore firmly expected the sad catastrophe to follow.

"The next morning, however, my little boy saw his playmate in full possession of his brains; at which sight he came to express his surprise, saying, 'Mamma, S. S. has not got his brains knocked out!' To which it was replied, 'No, no, child; his mother did not mean any such thing; that would have been a shocking thing indeed, to knock her child's brains out!' To this he again replied, 'But, mamma, she said she would,

I heard her say she would;' and added, 'Neighbour S. has told a sad story, has she not, mamma?'

"Well, this passed off, and, in the space of two or three days, neighbour S. came to my house, and at that instant my children were diverting themselves at play with each other, and making too much noise to suit me; upon which I ordered them to be silent, and take themselves to their seats; which was immediately done. At which my neighbour expressed surprise to see my children so governable, and intimated an earnest wish that she could bring her children into such order. I replied, that if she adopted my mode of government, she might obtain her wish; and added, 'I have laid down one short rule, which I invariably abide by; it is this, *I will be obeyed*; and all my children understand that this is the law of my house, so that they are seldom disposed to dispute the point with me. But you will

observe that I never enforce this law by threatening 'them to *knock*' *their brains out*, &c. 'The severest punishment which my children are ever threatened with, is the rod; and that instrument is seldom used, because, as before observed, my children know the law of my house, and therefore readily conform to it.' "

CHAP. VI.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST BE CONSTANTLY VIGILANT IN WATCHING OVER THE COMPANIONSHIP OF THEIR OFFSPRING.

As the best domestic instruction and example may be counteracted by habitual and close fellowship with gay and frivolous companions, it is of vast importance that parents should be very watchful of the friendships and intimacies of their offspring. It will be impossible, with the utmost care that can be

exerted, and more especially with boys, to shield our children from the sight of evil examples; but every right-hearted parent will strive with much earnestness, to prevent those private and domestic fellowships with the careless and profane, which might tend to vitiate conscience, and to foster impenitence and contempt of Divine authority. "Keep them," says the venerable Baxter, "as much as may be, from ill company, especially of ungodly playfellows. It is one of the greatest dangers for undoing of children in the world; especially when they are sent to common schools; for there is scarce any of these schools so good, but hath many rude and ungodly ill-taught children in it, that will speak profanely and filthily, and make their ribald and railing speeches a matter of boasting. And there is such tinder in nature for these sparks to catch upon, that there are very few children, but when they hear others take God's name in vain, or sing wanton

songs, or talk filthy words, or call one another reproachful names, do quickly imitate them. Therefore let those that are able, either educate their children chiefly at home, or in private and well-ordered schools; and those that cannot do so, must be more exceedingly watchful over them, and charge them to associate with the best; and speak to them of the odiousness of sinful practices, and the guilt of those who indulge in them; and point out the sad character and prospects of ungodly children; and when all has been done, it will be of God's special mercy if they are not undone by the force of contagious example."

The social tendency of the young being in general strongly marked, parents must endeavour rather to regulate than to eradicate it. In itself it is by no means a vice; but, through the infirmity of our fallen nature, it opens a wide door of temptation to the sanguine temperament of youth. To this fact

parents should be sensitively alive, and from the earliest development of the social principle in their offspring, should set themselves to guard against its more palpable abuse. Much may be done, by judicious parents, towards forming and directing the companionship of their children. Early instruction should be tendered to them, as to the dangers connected with intercourse with depraved associates; simple tests of praiseworthy character in the young should be familiarised to their minds; great vigilance should be exercised as to the mental habits of those to whose society they devote their leisure hours; and firm authority should be exerted, if need be, in checking intimacy with improper, or even dubious, acquaintances.

One of the happiest preventives of wrong fellowships abroad, is that of augmenting the sphere of domestic pleasures at home. Parents must be the *friends*, as well as the

guardians of their children. Home must be made attractive, if it is to be the sphere of congenial affections. Many parents forget that they were once children themselves, and fail to exercise a generous sympathy in the sprightly evolutions of buoyant childhood. This is a great error, wherever committed; and tends, as much perhaps as more serious evils, to alienate young people from the domestic fireside, and to tempt them to roam abroad in quest of that happiness which they despair of finding at home. Every reasonable and proper effort should be made by parents to render home the centre of all endearing and grateful associations; and thus to remove from children's minds the temptation of wandering into forbidden paths in search of enjoyments, which may be ministered with prudential care and anxiety under the eye of parental love.

Let me press with earnestness upon religious parents, the duty of aiming to form

and regulate the friendships of their children. Let their earliest attention be called to this important object, and there is reason to believe they will not fail. It will be too late to commence their efforts when wrong tastes and depraved intimacies have been formed. They must watch the first unfoldings of their children's minds, and act with vigour and determination in marking out the channel in which their social affections are to run. Such a course as this, pursued with prayerful dependence on the Divine blessing, will not, in ordinary cases, fail in realizing a successful result.

CHAP. VII.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST BE CAREFUL TO
AVOID THE TWO EXTREMES OF PARSIMONY AND PROFUSION.

Every child is entitled to expect such a measure of outward comfort as may comport with the circumstances in which Divine Providence has placed his parents; and if an expectation so reasonable is not gratified, the probable result will be, that chagrin and disappointment will set in upon the mind of a child; nor is it by any means unlikely that permanent alienation of heart may be the result of an ill-judging parsimony.

I am not indifferent to the fact, that the present is an age of unexampled extravagance; nor have I failed to observe that many thoughtless and profligate children have

beggared their industrious parents by keeping up a scale of expenditure altogether unsuitable to their rank and station in life; thereby rendering themselves contemptible in the opinion of all sober and judicious observers. But because some undutiful children have given the loose rein to their appetites, and have robbed their parents of that which might have supported them in their old age; this is no sufficient reason why heads of families should not strive to attain to a correct estimate of their circumstances, and act accordingly in providing for the daily comfort of their family.

In general, I have observed that a niggardly and stinted method of supplying the reasonable wants of children has produced evils of a very formidable character. In some, it lays the foundation of lavishness and prodigality; in others, it fosters a mean and dastardly spirit; in not a few it produces pilfering and dishonesty; and in all it greatly

lessens the respect due from children to their parents.

The personal equipment of youth, the supplies afforded them for purposes of legitimate amusement, the plan of conducting their education, the occupations to which they are trained, the manner in which they are treated on occasion of their settlement in life, and the provision made for them when parental instruction and example shall be no longer enjoyed, are all subjects deeply deserving the attention of every considerate and Christian parent. And he who can steer the happy medium between sinful profusion on the one hand, and illiberal treatment on the other, may expect to reap the rewards which await prudence when regulated by the dictates of Christian generosity.

At the same time I would guard young people, into whose hands this volume may find its way, against the formation of unreasonable expectations from their parents. Let

them not in the early stages of life, nor, indeed, in most cases, when they are grown up to years of maturity, attempt to become judges of their parents' circumstances and obligations. They may have many claims on them, to which *they* are entire strangers; and even if this should not be the case, they have an unquestionable right to act for themselves independently of the control of children, to whom, even if through mistake they should err, they can never be held to be accountable.

Young people will often meet with injudicious persons, who will whisper to them that their parents ought to act towards them with greater liberality: let them silence such "busy-bodies in other men's matters," by declining to listen to their dangerous and corrupting insinuations. A parent's name ought never to be pronounced in the hearing of a child, but in terms of unqualified respect. If obvious defects should exist, they

ought rarely, if ever, to be made the subject of animadversion in the presence of their offspring.

• C H A P. VIII.

IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST GUARD AGAINST A WRONG SYSTEM OF AMUSEMENT.

It will be conceded, by all competent judges, that something in the form of recreation is indispensably necessary to the well-being of children, both as it respects the body and the mind. It is a grand mistake, however, to suppose that exciting pleasures, which stimulate the passions, are essential to the health or happiness of children. The very reverse of this will be found to be the case. An education which contemplates pleasure as a primary object, will be sure to

impress some dangerous lessons on the young mind. Nothing can be more absurd than to imagine, that those children are most happy whose parents are continually racking their invention to find out some new source of amusement for them. Such a method will but foster a craving appetite for mere animal gratification, and will, in all probability, render fruitless all attempts to discipline the mind.

Amusement should be less an occupation with children, than an accompaniment of their other pursuits. They should be taught, at a very early period, to seek and find pleasure in the rational exercise of their faculties. And if there must be hours of relaxation from all mental effort, let them be spent in such recreations as tend to the invigoration of the bodily frame, without in any way ministering to the follies and vices of the youthful mind.

Parents should, as much as possible, en-

deavour to impress an intellectual character upon the amusements of their children, that they may contribute to the general improvement of the mind, while they afford necessary relaxation to the body.

The literature of the present age supplies an unprecedented number of works which combine amusement with instruction in some useful branch of knowledge. It must be the fault of parents themselves, if they allow their children, in early life, to find access to those foolish and worthless publications, which, thirty years ago, proved the bane of many a nursery. Nothing can be more injurious to a child of a lively and imaginative turn of mind, than the perusal of some of those ridiculous tales which were wont to be put into the hands of children. Happily, the taste for such works is almost extinct; while others of a more improving character have found their way into almost every family circle.

One of the best amusements for children will be found to consist in those simple and engaging compendiums of science and natural history which abound so much in the present day, and which have opened a wide and entertaining field of knowledge and wholesome excitement to the youthful population of the age in which we live.

The writings of Miss Jane Taylor, of Mrs. Sherwood, of Charlotte Elizabeth, of Mr. Williams, and of Dr. Krummacher, of the lively and sentimental class, are eminently fitted to fix the attention, and to engage the affections of the young on the side of reli-

As it respects the sports and pastimes of children, they ought ever to be placed under the regulation of sound moral principle, and ought to be at once benevolent and pure. All selfishness, cruelty, and indelicacy ought to be banished from them; and much vigilance will be required, on the part of Chris-

tian parents, in order to secure this paramount object for the good of their offspring.

To me it appears to be something like an axiom, in reference to the proper training of children, that no amusement ought to be voluntarily placed within their reach, about which any reasonable doubt can be entertained as to its moral fitness and decorum. The plea often urged, that there may be no harm in introducing children for once, or occasionally, to sights and scenes which it would be improper for them habitually to frequent, appears to me to be a very dangerous one. Suppose a case, by no means, it is feared, of infrequent occurrence, that the child, thus hazardously indulged, should become enamoured of the dubious spectacle or entertainment, and should be led to imbibe a taste for worldly amusements utterly ruinous to his immortal interests; what would then be the reflection of the unhappy parent, who had been the instrument of conducting

his unsuspecting child to the brink of that fearful precipice, from which he has been hurled into the gulf below? But what parent can assure himself, when he takes his child to some place of doubtful entertainment, that this may not be the bitter self-reproach he is preparing for himself? It is surely our duty to shun the very appearance of evil; and if children are to be trained on Christian principles, there must be, in order to success, a conscientious withholding of them from every thing that would minister to appetite, pride, and worldly frivolity.

I am satisfied, both from experience and observation, that children who had never once been permitted to taste the intoxicating cup of worldly pleasure, are far from being less happy than others to whom the whole range of fashionable dissipations has been thrown open. Not to permit the cultivation of such perilous tastes, is the only sure method of preventing the growth of them in

the youthful breast. It is the act of initiation that is so unspeakably dangerous; but never is it so much to be deprecated, as when it has been planned and executed by the erring hand of parental indulgence.

PART III.

METHOD TO BE PURSUED IN THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

HITHERTO our attention has been fixed rather on the obstacles which lie in the way of an effective discharge of parental duty, than on the duty itself. But it is not sufficient that evils and hinderances should be removed out of the way; there must be an adoption of such holy and scriptural methods as God approves, if we would see our children sitting meek and lowly, at the feet of Jesus. If they are, indeed, to be a holy seed, they must not only be outwardly dedicated to God, but diligently trained in the way of his statutes.

To the conscientious discharge of this duty, parents who practise infant baptism have solemnly bound themselves. They gave their offspring back, as it were, in that significant rite, to the Lord; acknowledging that they were his; engaging to train them for heaven; and saying, in effect, "As for us and our house, we will serve the Lord."

Nor will those Christian parents, who may not see it to be their duty to baptize their infant offspring, be less anxious to yield themselves to the plain and emphatic injunctions of God's holy word:—"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;"—"Train up a child in the way that he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

FIRST SECTION.

THE FIRST GREAT BRANCH OF PARENTAL DUTY, IS THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

When I say that parents are bound to attend to the *religious* education of their children, I do not mean to insinuate that they are to neglect that secular training which is necessary to fit them for those spheres of life in which Divine Providence has destined them to move. There is nothing in the religious obligations of Christian parents that forbids their imparting to them all the ordinary branches of a polite education. All parents, indeed, should remember, that knowledge is the true dignity of man, and that it is their duty to furnish their children with as good a general education, as

their circumstances will admit. Were this suggestion acted on to a far greater extent, parents would find their account in it, and would do more to promote the real success of their children in future life, than by leaving them thousands of gold and silver, with minds uninformed, and manners uncultivated.

In Scotland, where few parents, comparatively, can entertain the reasonable prospect of leaving fortunes for their children, every man does what he can to educate his son; and when his term of study is completed, he gives him a father's blessing, and commits him to the care of an indulgent and gracious Providence. The cheapness of a university education in that country has undoubtedly, next to religion itself, proved one of its greatest blessings. Why should not England supply equal facilities for the economical education of the people? Is not the formidable expense connected with a college

course, to say nothing of the exclusive pretensions of the English universities, one of our greatest national calamities? Why in England, and nowhere else, should our minor farmers and our middle class of tradesmen, be shut out from the benefits of a liberal education? Why, in England, any more than in France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, &c. should a fortune be required in carrying even a prudent youth through his university curriculum? This is a subject well deserving the attention of enlightened statesmen; and when they can address themselves in good earnest to its discussion, without reference to party politics, they will confer an inestimable boon on the people of England, who are worse dealt with in this matter than any enlightened nation on the face of the earth.

• In a large sense, too, education will include the particular profession or calling to which a youth is devoted. On this subject,

however, I will say nothing more, than that the occupation should be lawful, and such, if possible, as to accord with the health and inclination of the child. If parents are at once firm and conciliatory in their system of government, they will find but little difficulty, in ordinary cases, in directing the current of their children's wishes into a proper channel.

Here let me utter the voice of warning, and entreat parents to pause, ere they commit the moral and religious welfare of their children to the care of those who will be sure to set light by the awful trust. O let them not be accessory, for the sake of any worldly advantage, to the eternal ruin of their offspring, by placing them in families where their best interests will be utterly neglected! I am the more anxious in tendering this advice, because I have often seen professing parents lamentably neglectful on this head. Nay, I have seen a parent, otherwise careful

of the spiritual interests of his children, lay aside all his wonted caution and forethought, just at that moment when his child had to quit the home of his youth, and when vigilance and circumspection had become doubly necessary. It is often, doubtless, difficult for parents to know how to dispose of their children when the term of their education is completed; but assuredly, as they would not be chargeable another day with the ruin of their immortal souls, it becomes them to strain every nerve, when they quit the parental roof, to prevent the utter extinction of those religious impressions which they have laboured to convey to them during the period of their tender infancy and childhood.

But it is the religious education of children, I have more immediately to do with in this brief manual: Christian parents are solemnly enjoined "to bring their children up in the admonition of the Lord;" that is, in the diligent use of appointed means; such

means as Christ has ordained; such means as are connected with his approbation; such means as tend to prepare the young to become his followers; such means as have drawn down the Divine blessing upon thousands in every age; and such means as, when properly used, are the best security of the habitations of the righteous.

CHAP. I.

IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN, PRIMARY REGARD
MUST BE HAD TO THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE INSTRUCTION
CONVEYED.

If a Christian result for eternity is to be looked for from education, it must be conducted on strictly Christian principles. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." A decidedly Christian effect can

only spring from the use of means distinctly Christian. In one word, all sound instruction for eternity must be derived from the infallible records of divine truth. The leading principles of the Christian faith must be familiarized to the minds of children, by repeated and patient effort, if they are to grow up in the knowledge of our God and of his Christ. From the earliest dawning of reason, children should be simply and tenderly instructed in the character and perfections of the supreme Jehovah; in their own fallen and guilty state, as related to the first Adam; in the unspeakable love of God in giving his Son to die for guilty mortals; in the condescension and grace of our atoning High Priest; and in the necessity of their being renewed in the spirit of their minds, before they can enter into the kingdom of God. All this should be done, as much as possible, in the very words of scripture, and with a distinct reference to the authority of God,

as binding, the doctrine of revealed truth upon the human conscience.

Nor should the instruction of children stop short with the inculcation of God's method of salvation for a guilty creature; *though there assuredly it ought to begin.* It is a fatal error, but one I fear of frequent occurrence, to confine the religious training of children to moral points. If a child is to become a Christian, it can only be by becoming acquainted with the all-absorbing theme of human redemption by the cross of Christ. Nor is there any theme more fitted to awaken interest in the earliest stages of mental development. The love of God in Christ Jesus is capable of being laid open, with prodigious effect, even to the infant mind. And I am yet to learn, that, with the Bible in our hands, we are at liberty to pursue one method in seeking the conversion of adults, and another when we aim at the salvation of our tender offspring. The order

pursued, in both cases, must be the same, though greater simplicity will be necessary in dealing with the young than with those of more advanced years.

But though the doctrine which requires to be believed in order to salvation should be forcibly placed before the minds of children, as the best method of awakening them to religious concern, they should be at the same time plied with the whole circle of relative and moral duties. They should be taught the obligation and loveliness of reverencing and obeying their parents; they should be fortified, by appeals to the word of God, against the allurements of vicious and corrupting society; they should be initiated into the love of truth, by vivid representations of the odiousness of falsehood; they should be instructed in the duties of prayer, searching the scriptures, and attending the house of God; they should be made acquainted with the several obligations which they owe to

superiors, inferiors, and equals. But let all these duties be urged upon Christian principles, or there will be extreme danger of teaching children, on system, to seek justification by the works of the law.

CHAP. II.

IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN, MANNER, NO LESS THAN MATTER, MUST BE DULY REGARDED.

The best instructions may be rendered powerless by some unhappy defect in the mode of conveying them to the youthful mind. The instructor of children must never forget the necessity of going to work in an elementary way, if a successful issue is to follow. *Simplicity* must mark our various efforts to reach the infant mind. Nor is it an easy task to come down to the

capacities of children. It is, indeed, much more easy to be intricate than simple. The method which exercises the memory, without leading captive the understanding and the heart, is greatly to be deprecated. Children should be made to *understand*, as much as possible, what they learn; for in this way only can the drudgery connected with the acquirement of knowledge be overcome. But if children are to understand what they are taught, so as to feel interested in it, parents must be willing to take the pains requisite to simplify their instructions.

“I am surprised at nothing,” said Mr. Cecil, “which Dr. Watts did, but his Hymns for Children. Other men could have written as well as he in his other works, but how he wrote these hymns I know not.”* Children ought not to be instructed in a dry abstract method; their attention should be roused and kept up by sudden, sprightly turns of

thought, or by such narrations and appeals to facts as are sure to interest the fancy and the imagination. Examples of this mode of teaching abound in Scripture, and parents cannot take a surer method of getting at the hearts of their children, than by introducing them to an early acquaintance with the parables of our blessed Lord, which convey the great lessons of the gospel in an easy and inviting manner.

After much reflection, however, on the several methods adopted for training the young mind to the attainment of solid religious knowledge, I am strongly of opinion that the catechetical mode of conveying instruction has the decided preference over all others. And of all modes of catechising, that appears to be the most effectual which is founded expressly upon some portion of God's holy word which the child has been directed to read.

A catechism, however well constructed,

has this disadvantage, that both question and answer may be committed to memory, while neither is thoroughly understood. I do not say, by any means, that no advantage may accrue in future life from the form of sound words thus treasured up in the memory; but I am persuaded, that what is at the moment of acquisition perfectly understood is most likely to be permanently beneficial. As it is Bible truth that forms the true element of Christian instruction, why should not the Bible itself, in all cases, be the class-book for teaching Christianity? Can any digest, however excellent, be equal to the pure original? or can any human composition, however ingeniously contrived, possess equal charms with the most wonderful production in the universe?

If catechisms, however, are resorted to, and perhaps they must be so in some cases, it will be incumbent on parents to guard against their children learning them by rote,

without attaching any definite idea to the words with which the memory becomes stored. This remark applies with peculiar force to that admirable form of sound words called "The Shorter Catechism." As it is a matured system of Christian theology, it requires much explanation when conveyed to the minds of very young children. If a parent is capable of expounding it, and will put forth the amount of labour necessary to make it plain, the benefit conferred by such thorough instruction in the whole system of revealed truth, will be incalculably great.

The plan adopted in most serious families in Scotland is truly worthy of imitation. The Shorter Catechism, with proofs, is committed to memory by the children; and the parent does not content himself by merely hearing the prescribed task, but proposes such additional questions upon each separate answer, as may be suggested by his previous knowledge. In this way young people,

brought up in such families, become well acquainted, at an early period of life, with all the leading doctrines and duties of the gospel.

My great anxiety, however, is to see a Bible class established in every Christian family. This is the only method by which the young will become intimately acquainted with the word of God. One of two plans may be adopted for the conduct of these Bible classes. At one diet of instruction, the portion of Scripture may be expounded to a child, upon which the parent intends to examine him at the next. In this way the child will, in some measure, be prepared for the questions about to be proposed to him; and yet the activities of his mind will be kept alive, in endeavouring to furnish himself with a thorough knowledge of the prescribed task.

But another mode of conducting Bible classes I have found practically to be more

serviceable; viz. to hand out a set of questions, without answers, upon particular portions of Scripture. This has saved the time of the pupil, by directing his thoughts at once into a definite channel; and, generally speaking, I have found young people deeply interested in this mode of going to work. But, if I might speak from experience, I would have every parent, who is capable, to construct his own questions. This will compel his own study of the word of God, and will enable him to speak more naturally to his children, than when he is using the compositions of other men. Let him avail himself of the labours of other minds, but let this be rather to brighten his own perceptions, and to fit him for the task of instructing his children, than to exonerate himself from mental effort.

I need scarcely say, that the Christian instruction of a family must ever be regulated by system. A few desultory efforts will do

but little towards forming the mind of a child upon Christian principles. A portion of every day must be devoted to the task of Christian instruction; and the Lord's day, in particular, ought to be largely employed in inculcating upon children's minds the lessons of the gospel. With the dawn of reason this sacred process must be commenced; and patience and perseverance must be taxed to their utmost endurance, in prosecuting the interesting object to its final issue. "Whom," said the prophet, "shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts; for precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little."*

Nor must parents allow themselves to forget, that all the lessons of Christianity must be conveyed in the spirit of the gospel.

* Isa. xxviii. 9, 10.

Love to the soul of the child must shine through all the instructions imparted to it. Religion must be made as little as possible a task, and negligences which occur in the pursuit of it must be visited with a forbearing and kindly temper. Nothing is more to be deprecated than to connect the diet of family instruction with a morose countenance, and a frowning severity of general deportment. The conduct of the Saviour, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," is the model which parents must imitate, in opening upon the minds of their offspring the tender and pathetic lessons of the gospel. "

CHAP. III.

IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN, CONSTANT REFERENCE MUST BE HAD TO THE GRAND OBJECT FOR WHICH INSTRUCTION IS IMPARTED.

This consideration is much more important than on a first view it may appear to be. In the details of a religious education, its paramount design must never for a moment be lost sight of. Children should be taught to feel that their parents are aiming with a steady, earnest purpose at their *salvation*; that all their methods of tuition are bent towards the promotion of that one great concern which involves their eternal safety and peace.

I cannot help fearing that even pious parents too often fail in this vital department of a religious education. Their aim is not sufficiently direct at the hearts and con-

sciences of their offspring. "They allow them to forget that they are educating them for eternity. The lessons of heavenly truth are indeed impressed on the intellect and the memory; but the appeal to their moral and accountable nature is by far too feeble and cold. In the toil and effort of instruction, its all-absorbing object is sinfully overlooked. It is not enough to store the mind with materials for religious thought and contemplation; the warm affections of the young must be enlisted, by all kindly and persuasive methods, on the side of piety; the heart must be taken captive by the moral beauty of truth, and by the infinite loveliness of Him whom it is the great object of truth to reveal. But if these delightful objects are to be realized, there must be a suitableness in the means employed to the result contemplated. Parents must often "beseech" their children "to be reconciled unto God;" they must add persuasion to instruction and

precept; and must use all proper methods to convince their anxious charge that they are affectionately in earnest to lead them in the way of peace and holiness. . .

None but those who have made trial of this course can fully appreciate either its difficulties or its pleasures. Its difficulties arise from two sources,—the want of a sufficient measure of spirituality and devotedness in the hearts of parents, and the tendency in even the young mind to resist the faithful appeals of truth. But the pleasures connected with such a course, both present and prospective, are the highest that await a Christian parent in the process of training his beloved offspring for God. .

It is obvious, then, that nothing short of a glowing and ever-watchful piety can fit parents for the due discharge of their solemn trust. If they would plead effectually with their children, as it respects eternal interests, they must themselves be baptized with the

spirit of Christ. A deep feeling of responsibility must seize upon their spirits; they must travail in birth until Christ is formed in the hearts of their children; in one word, they must be in earnest to conduct them by gentle steps to the Friend of sinners.

Christian parents! can any object be dearer to your hearts than the conversion of the children whom God has given to you? Can a greater comfort await you, than that you should be the instruments of their spiritual birth? Did they not derive from you the deadly poison of an apostate nature; and shall you not employ, with anxious fidelity and affection, the means which God has ordained for counteracting its fatal effects? Be entreated, like the mother of young Timothy, to train up your little ones, from their earliest infancy, to love and serve the God of their fathers, and to "know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith, which is

Christ Jesus.”* Show them, I beseech you, that their happiness, for both worlds, is the object which lies nearest to your hearts; that you are anxious to guard them against the adoption of all wrong principles and practices; and that true peace of mind will be the sure result of an early devotion of themselves to the service of Christ. Point out to them the immediate and certain connexion between sin and misery; teach them that the government of evil tempers will bring with it its own reward; that amiable and benevolent dispositions will endear them to all the good; that love, and gentleness, and meekness will conform them to the mind of Christ, and lay the foundation of their success in this life, and their meetness for the pure and peaceful fellowships of heaven. Let them see from the whole of your deportment, that you are seeking first the kingdom of heaven for them, and the righteousness thereof; and that all

other interests are pursued, in subordination to this—the highest, the noblest, and the best end of existence.

CHAP. IV.

IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST BE CAREFUL THAT THEIR EXAMPLE SHOULD KEEP PACE WITH THEIR INSTRUCTIONS.

Children are keen observers of the actions of others; and the slightest discrepancy in the conduct of a parent or instructor will tend much to impede the success of the best instructions. O parents! if you would desire to give full effect to your several anxious efforts for the conversion of your children, make conscience of corroborating them all by a holy and consistent example. Be religiously careful to maintain, at all times, the true decorum of your Christian character.

Exhibit practical godliness before the observant eye of your children, in its purest, loveliest, and most winning attributes. "The greatest reverence," said a heathen writer, "is due to children."*. The sentiment well deserves the attention of every parent who would foster right impressions in the minds of his offspring.

Parents! be most circumspect in the whole of your moral and religious deportment, lest your children should reproach you in the same manner as did the servant of Plato—"My master hath written a book against anger, but he himself is passionate." I recollect reading of a son who once said to his father, "I have done evil, but I learnt it of *you*."

O let nothing arise in your conduct, then, to throw a shadow of doubt over the sincerity of your counsels. Teach by your silent and upright example, no less than by

your faithful and persevering admonitions. Let your children feel, even in all their waywardness, that your conduct is without reproach; and that the lessons you inculcate are also the principles upon which you habitually act. I entreat you very carefully to examine the first part of this treatise, and to guard most anxiously against the evils which are there detailed. Pursuing this course, you may assure yourselves that you will have a testimony in the consciences of your children which none of the influences of an evil world will be able perfectly to obliterate.

It was my privilege to receive instruction in early life from the lips of parents who eminently adorned the gospel of Christ in their walk and conversation; and I well remember, long before I felt any thing of the power of religion on my own heart, that their meek, cheerful, holy, and consistent deportment, gave pungency to all their

warnings and rebukes, and left upon conscience an abiding conviction, that, whatever might become of me for eternity, they were in the sure road to heaven and eternal glory. In vain did my wayward heart suggest at times, that their rules of family government were too rigid and unbending; for a faithful monitor whispered within me, that they were only aiming at my good, and that out of the abundance of a devoted heart they urged upon their offspring the adoption of the only principles of happiness. I can, even at this distant period, call to recollection moments of deep thoughtfulness, when, in something like prayer, I have fallen down upon my knees, and implored God to subdue my rebellious heart, and make me as good as my beloved parents.

But such an impression as this could not have been produced, if precept had been the only mode of instruction adopted under the parental roof. It was goodness—it was

purity—it was uprightness,—associated with all reasonable kindness and indulgence, that awed the conscience. The living model of Christian virtues stood daily before my eyes, and though “the imagination of the heart was evil, only evil, and that continually,” yet there was a still small voice which ever and anon reminded me, that I must meet my godly parents at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Will my readers pardon this illustration from the records of personal experience? and will they lay to heart the thought, that, if parents would be instruments of the conversion of their children, they must study to be pre-eminently holy and consistent in their habitual deportment?

CHAP. V.

IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN, PARENTS MUST BE EVER-MINDFUL OF THAT AGENCY BY WHICH ALONE THE HEARTS OF THEIR CHILDREN CAN BE CHANGED.

The doctrine of Divine influence, as taught by inspired men, was never intended to supersede the use of any of the appointed means of grace. On the contrary, it is the only doctrine that can impart to the use of means its legitimate energy. When the innate depravity of our children is taken into account, and when we reflect on the difficulties we experience in endeavouring to inculcate even a single holy lesson, we may well yield ourselves to the conviction, that our most zealous efforts will be in vain, without the blessing of the Eternal Spirit.

Strive, O parents! to convert your children; be "instant in season, out of season,"

to compass this grand object; act as if all depended on yourselves;—but, oh, forget not your utter dependence upon Him who alone can quicken the dead hearts of your children, to spiritual life. Prove your belief in the doctrine of the necessity of Divine influence, by continually labouring for the good of your children *in the spirit of prayer*. Go with their several cases to the throne of grace, and ask God to touch the springs of holy action in their hearts; ask him to fulfil his gracious promises concerning the offspring of his servants; wrestle daily with the Angel of the covenant, and determine not to let him go till he grant you a blessing. Pray *with and for* your children. Let them feel that they live in the atmosphere of prayer. Encourage them to pray for themselves; and teach them, at an early period of life, to express their own wants in words of their own suggestion. Habituate your minds to a feeling of reliance upon divine

grace in all that you do for the spiritual interests of your children. Labour in the promised strength of Omnipotence. It is this state of mind alone which will keep you, on the one hand, from discouragement, and, on the other, from self-confidence. He who acts for God in cultivating the minds of his offspring, will say and feel with the apostle, "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

Parents should be deeply penetrated with the conviction, that, without Christ, they can do nothing effectually to save the souls of their children. "In fact, how could they succeed in any one instance, but for the Divine aid? How patiently, then, and with what sweetness of temper, should they bear with difficulties and hinderances among their children, praying and waiting quietly and serenely for the blessing of God, while they steadily and unweariedly continue to employ

the means, which, on full consideration, appear to them to be the best in their power. It is surprising how such conduct succeeds in the end; children altering unaccountably for the better; and a bright dawn opening on a parent, when he thinks that a long and dark night is before him. Under discouraging circumstances it is of the highest importance that he should possess his soul in patience, and not suffer his affection to be alienated from his child. If he fails in these respects, his ability to conduct him in the right path will assuredly be weakened—perhaps entirely lost.”*

Parents, let me exhort you to plant and water the seeds of divine truth in the hearts of your children, in the spirit of lively hope. Do not think it a thing improbable that you shall at last be blessed in your efforts. Believe that in training up your children in the way that they should go, you are following

* Practical View of Education, p. 122.

the revealed will of Heaven, and that when they are old, they will not depart from it. Attempt much, and then expect much. Be sanguine about the conversion of your dear children. Encourage your hearts by meditating on the blessing which has attended the due discharge of parental duty; and, though present symptoms may be unpromising, suffer no feeling of deep discouragement or unbelief to seize upon your minds. Recollect that, while divine grace is sovereign in its operations, it yet runs in the channel of the promise, and that, from the very beginning, God has cheered the minds of his servants by holding out bright hopes to them respecting those tender ones, who have been dedicated to his praise, and trained in his fear. Has not God said, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, and as willows by the water-

courses? One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* But trust not in your own wisdom or strength. The best plans will be ineffectual, unless God shall bless them. Be sure ever to seek that blessing. Water your efforts with your tears and your prayers. Give God the glory of every favourable symptom that you may witness in prosecuting your delightful work. Go forward in the path of duty without weariness or presumption; and never approach God for yourselves without beseeching him on behalf of those who are dear to you as your own souls. Let your continual prayer be that of David, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our

* Isa. xlv. 3.

God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

SECOND SECTION.

THE SECOND BRANCH OF PARENTAL DUTY IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FAMILY DISCIPLINE.

Every system of domestic education which excludes the "nurture of the Lord," as it is styled in apostolic phrase, proceeds, I conceive, upon a mistaken notion of the present state of human nature, and is at variance with the fixed procedure of the Divine government. Children, alas! afford, from the earliest dawnings of reason, affecting proof of their depravity; and though the

process of chastisement and restraint is a very self-deny^{ing} one to a benevolent and tender heart, yet it is, nevertheless, an essential part of the duty which a Christian parent owes to his offspring. That is but selfishness, which would tempt us to sacrifice stern obligation for the sake of indulging a feeble and unhealthy sensibility.

CHAP. I.

THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE ON THE SUBJECT OF PARENTAL RESTRAINT AND DISCIPLINE.

Parents cannot hope for a blessing on their efforts to benefit their children, but in so far as they are prepared to yield themselves submissively to the Divine authority, on all subjects connected with their spiritual welfare.

The spirit of modern refinement may attempt to dispense with chastisement as the

vulgar appendage of a by-gone age; but that parent who looks on his Bible as the emanation of infinite wisdom and benevolence, will pause ere he adopt a theory which contravenes some of the sternest lessons both of experience and revelation.

Let over-indulgent fathers, and falsely-tender mothers, listen with profound attention to the voice of infallible truth. "Chasten thy son, while there is hope; and let not thy soul spare for his crying."* "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes."† "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."‡ "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."§ "Withhold not correction

* Prov. xix. 18.

† Prov. xiii. 24.

‡ Prov. xxix. 15, 27.

§ Prov. xxiii. 15.

from thy child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die: thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell.”*

Oh, if I could present before the minds of parents, in one vivid picture, the mournful effects which have resulted in all ages from a criminal neglect of wholesome discipline, how forcibly would it remind them of the importance of a duty, which, however painful to a tender spirit, is yet indispensable to the well-being of the rising generation. Could I conduct my readers into the house of Eli the prophet, and point them to the sad effects of neglecting “the nurture of the Lord,” as exhibited in the history of his ungodly sons; could I bring them within hearing of that awful message which God delivered to Samuel concerning Eli and his devoted house, I doubt not I should draw tears from the eyes of every considerate parent. Listen,

* Prov. xxiii. 13, 14.

ye pious parents, to the Divine threatening which the neglect of parental discipline drew forth from the lips of the God of love. "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house;—when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And, therefore, I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."* Learn from this tremendous threatening, how offensive in the sight of God is that profligacy which springs up in a pious house, by reason of the neglect of wholesome and well-sustained discipline.

Of Adonijah it is recorded, that "His father," unhappy man! "had not displeased him at any time, in saying, why hast thou done so?" and he lived, as might have been expected, to be his father's grief, and to prove false to his father's government.*

Oh, how different the inspired testimony concerning Abraham, the father of the faithful! "I know him," said the most High, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."†

* 1 Kings i. 6, 7, 9. † Gen. xiii. 19.

CHAP. II.

RULES BY WHICH PARENTAL RESTRAINT AND DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE REGULATED.

Because the scriptures enjoin a firm and unyielding discipline on the part of parents, it does not by any means follow that they are to put on the character of tyrants, and to do that by stern authority, which may, in many cases, be best accomplished by mild persuasion and gentle admonition. The abstract authority of a parent, and more especially the rod, which is its most formidable emblem, ought, as much as possible, to be reserved in the back-ground, and to be brought forth to view only on great and necessary occasions. For—

1. *The reason of a child should be appealed to, in the matter of discipline, no less than in that of instruction.*

Not that discipline is to be abandoned because a child, in a perverted state of mind, cannot perceive the reasonableness of it. All that is contended for is, that punishment, to be useful, must be administered upon reasonable principles, one of which assuredly is, to endeavour to enlist the conscience of the child on the side of the punishment administered. "

Tell me not that children, in a state of infancy, are incapable of understanding wherefore a parent contends with them. If the conduct objected to be really censurable, it will, in most cases, be possible to bring the feeling of guilt home to the child's conscience. Let the reflecting mother, who has seen, in a thousand instances, the eye of her little babe watching and reflecting the varied expression of her countenance, as she has

dandled it upon her knees, say how susceptible even infancy itself is of the feeling of what is pleasing or the contrary to the mind of a parent.

Children may very soon be taught to regard some standard of duty; and, when once this has been effected, it will be comparatively easy to convince them of the propriety of visiting the breach of it with some appropriate marks of displeasure. Parents should labour to impress the minds of their children with the conviction, that the several acts of their discipline are the very reverse of arbitrary—that they have always a substantial reason for their corrections—that they are not for their injury, but for their good—that they are greatly pained in the administration of them—and that nothing but a sense of duty to God, and a love to their immortal souls, could induce them to adopt any method of punishment whatsoever.

2. *All acts of discipline should be proportioned, as nearly as possible, to the offence of which a child has been guilty.*

If this is not attended to, the minds of children will be greatly misled as to the real extent of guilt connected with particular actions. Slight offences, indeed, are not to be overlooked because they are slight; but neither are they to be confounded with serious violations of filial duty, or with flagrant breaches of the commandments of God. As all offences are not of equal magnitude, so the punishments by which they are corrected should widely differ from each other in their degrees of severity.

Nothing is more important to the well-being of a family, than the rigid observance of this rule. If, unhappily, parents should allow themselves to forget it, they will confound the notions of their children as to the actual principles of right and wrong; or

breed in the young mind an intense feeling of that injustice which is practised under the mistaken guise of parental authority.

3. *When correction becomes necessary, it should be administered, as much as possible, in the absence of all anger and violent emotion.*

Too many parents, in using the rod, are guilty of correcting their children "after their own pleasure, as the apostle to the Hebrews expresses it, rather than for their profit, that they may be made partakers of a divine nature." Hence the many painful alienations which take place in families, as the result of these unsanctified chastisements. A parent, duly sensible of the responsibility of his situation, will not suffer himself to correct his child in a fit of anger, lest, in performing a painful duty in a wrong state of mind, he should preclude all the moral benefits it is fitted to secure, when gone

about in a scriptural and consistent manner. He will be anxious, in correcting the fault of his child, not to commit a serious breach of the law of God himself, by the use of rash words, angry looks, and violent gestures. He will never think of visiting in passion some insignificant assault on his own personal feelings, and then passing by some gross offence against the Majesty of heaven.

Let me entreat parents to avoid, in the correction of their children, all expressions breathing the spirit of revenge, and to be careful, when excited by the unlovely conduct of any of them, not to evince any state of mind contrary to the spirit of unmixed beneyolence. This is no easy matter, when the infirmity of human nature is taken into account; but if we would govern well our dear children, we must first learn to chasten and subdue our own spirit.

What would you think of the judge who should so far forget himself as to treat with

insult, and cruelty, and rage, the hapless criminal upon whom he was pronouncing the sentence of injured justice? Would you not say that he was a disgrace to the bench, if not to human nature itself? And what ought we to think of the parent who, in correcting his own beloved child, can cherish any other feelings than those of unmingled pity and regret? Must we not say that, when passion takes the place of calm and dignified remonstrance and rebuke, he is guilty of overlooking the best interests of his child, and turning that discipline which was intended as a blessing, into a curse? O parents! let us imitate the conduct of our heavenly Father, in all our attempts to reduce our dear children to a right state of discipline. Of Him it is said, and the chastisements of his love are the immediate subject of reference, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

On the other hand, that pliancy of character; and that softness of nature, which would shrink from discipline because it is painful, ought strenuously to be guarded against. If passion and anger are to be avoided, so also are indecision and timidity in the legitimate use of the rod, and other necessary modes of punishment. The indulgent mode of government, when carried to an extreme, is far more injurious in its consequences than even severity itself. To establish authority upon a firm and rational basis, ought to be the distinct aim of every parent; and no feeling of mistaken tenderness should be suffered to stand in the way of so essential a feature in the right government of a Christian family.

4. *All family discipline should be administered with a distinct and anxious reference to the dispositions of individual children.*

Though the object aimed at, in every act of discipline, is the same, the mode of compassing that object must be varied, according to the mental and physical tendencies of individual children. That discipline which might be fitted to accomplish all the moral and intellectual ends of family government in one mind, might, from its want of adaptation, utterly fail in another.

The study of individual character, as developed in each separate child in a single family, is an indispensable duty, on the part of every parent who would know how to rule well his own house. In nothing will the practical wisdom of a parent be more strikingly evinced than in apportioning suitable correction to his children, according to their several ages, dispositions, and characters. One, it may be, will only require a look of

parental displeasure; another may require to be sharply rebuked; a third may be most powerfully influenced by some well-contrived mark of ignominy and shame! a fourth may be most benefited by a proper use of the rod; and a fifth may perhaps require the use of all.

In some children there will be found such a peculiarity both of mental and physical temperament, as to require the utmost stretch of parental wisdom, in adopting suitable methods of effective government. If parents do not make such children their peculiar study, with a view to the right discipline of their minds, they may goad them to insanity, or depress them to idiocy.

5. *In the exercise of discipline, parents must be careful not to punish their children for that which, upon examination, would appear to be no fault.*

Rash punishment, that is, punishment without a sufficient reason, is extremely vitiating to the minds of children. A parent's integrity in the exercise of discipline should never pass under a temporary cloud of suspicion. A child should ever be taught to look upon a parent's heart as the sanctuary of justice. If the conduct of a parent should ever impress a different lesson upon the mind of a child, oh, how it will break down all the strongest safeguards of youth!

In all cases, punishment should be resorted to with reluctance; but when a parent flies to it without any sufficient reason, or upon some mistaken impression of the conduct of a child, it is indeed a formidable evil. Such a thoughtless and unjustifiable policy will breed contempt in some minds, and in others,

of a more delicate and sensitive texture, it will lead to reserve and restraint, and many other states of mind, utterly at variance with open frankness and sincerity, the loveliest attributes of the infant mind, ere yet corrupted by the duplicitous intercourse of the world.

If parents would retain the unbroken confidence of their children—and what should they not be prepared to sacrifice, that duty permits, for such an object?—they must ever act towards them with rigid justice, and even-handed impartiality. O ye fathers and mothers! think what an important thing it is for you to be able to look into the hearts of your children by the telescopic glass which love and confidence will not fail to supply. Discourage them, by all winning methods, as well as by correct and dignified conduct, to repose all their secrets in your faithful bosom. Strive to hide from them all the artificial methods which obtain in

worldly families, and which so fearfully pervert the young mind. Endeavour by all your training to make them natural characters. Teach them to detest all disguise and insincerity, and never set them an example of the opposite qualities in your own conduct. Let them learn to regard you as their tried friends, with whom they can have no concealments, and to whom they can, without even a struggle, lay open the very secrets of their hearts.

If you can reach this point in your family discipline, you will have done much towards securing the highest ends of a well-regulated education. But if it shall be your happiness thus to be blessed in your children, forget not, that your sense of *justice* and *integrity*, in every part of your discipline, must never forsake you in a single instance. You must never misrepresent the conduct of a child; you must never charge him, much less punish him, for what he has not done: you must be

his defender when he is in the right; and even when he has erred, you must show him that you are far more reluctant to punish than to commend.

Nor must you expect a precocity in the manners and general deportment of children, which their tender years would not warrant you reasonably to look for. Let every tendency to vice meet its appropriate reward; but do not suffer an over-fastidious imagination to invest the buoyant acts of sportive youth with the attributes of dark and malignant crime. The habit of constantly chiding young people for the innocent frivolities of their tender years, is very pernicious, and at variance with all just views of mental discipline. And when it is done in the presence of strangers, with whom they naturally desire to stand well, the evil is greatly increased. Indeed, in all cases, parents should avoid, if possible, both the *reproof* and the *correction* of their children, when visitors, and even

friends, happen to be present. Whatever tends to the unnecessary degradation of a child must diminish the feeling of self-respect, and in so far weaken the motive to good conduct for the future.

6. *Let parental discipline ever be sanctified by prayer.*

I knew an eminently devoted minister of Jesus Christ, who never corrected his children, without, in the first instance, taking them aside, and imploring the Divine blessing upon the painful and self-denying duty about to be performed. In this way, he told me, that he obtained the complete mastery over unhallowed passion, and rarely ever failed in softening the heart of the juvenile delinquent. But such a method requires much grace and piety on the part of a parent; more, it is to be feared, than falls to the lot of multitudes who rank under the Christian profession. Yet, it may be fairly

asked, does it imply a greater degree of real concern for the spiritual wants of a child, than ought to find a place in the heart of every parent who is really anxious to lead his offspring to the true knowledge of God?

But whether parents take their children thus formally aside for prayer or not, let me entreat them never to administer chastisement to their offspring without calling to their remembrance two things; *first*, that correction is the wisely appointed ordinance of God; and, *secondly*, that, like all his other ordinances, it must fail of success if his blessing does not accompany it. The inference from these two propositions is resistless, and ought to sink deeply into the heart of every parent. It is surely thus, that they who expect a blessing on parental discipline must ask it in prayer of Him who alone can give it.

Upon the whole, on the subject of punishments, I know not how better to express

myself with truth and justice, than in the words of the late excellent Mr. Babington, a man equally distinguished by the amiableness of his temper, and the fervency of his devotedness to God. "Every method," he observes, "should be used to prevent or lessen the necessity of punishments; but when really wanted, they *must* be inflicted. In such cases, the omission of the punishment is an evil of the first magnitude. Much as I deprecate a severe system in education, I fully agree with an approved author, that one of indulgence is more to be dreaded. If we listen to the Divine command, we shall not spoil the child by sparing the rod. If we copy the Divine example, we shall not be led by any inducements to acquiesce in what is wrong. If we have a predominant hatred of sin and love of holiness, our very feelings will prevent us from doing so. Our principles and inclinations will alike impel us to act with vigour and perseverance in

combating evil in our families. No parental fondness, no love of personal ease, will prevail with us to give up the contest. While our conduct exhibits mildness and gentleness, it will as strongly be marked by firmness and decision.

“Let not any parent fear the loss of his child’s affection, from proper strictness in education, when combined with the other parts of the course I am recommending. I am convinced that, on the contrary, the child’s love for him will be increased by such strictness making a part of his system. Without it, there will be less esteem for the parent; and it is unnecessary to show how very greatly esteem contributes to real affection; so greatly, indeed, that I believe an attempt to obtain genuine affection by indulgence will not only fail, but will produce the opposite effect. Indulgence will foster selfishness and sensuality, and with them hardness of heart. A person whom you

indulge will often love to be with you, will cling to you, and show you great fondness; but cease to indulge, and comparative coldness and indifference will quickly follow. Does not this change prove that *self* was at the bottom of former appearances, and was the chief, if not the only, object of affection? Can we wonder at such a result? God's blessing accompanies the performance of a duty; his displeasure, its omission. With his blessing, all things will work together for good; with his displeasure, what can be expected but disappointment and evil?"*

* A Practical View of Christian Education in its early stages, p. 134.

CHAP. III.

HOW TO MAKE THE SABBATH PLEASANT AND PROFITABLE TO
THE YOUNG.

It must have occurred to almost every reflecting mind, that the work of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is one which requires much consideration; nor is there any question, connected with that work, more difficult, or more important, than this—"How may the Lord's day be employed so as to make it pleasant, and at the same time profitable? how can we combine that measure of restraint which the sanctity of the day requires, with that attention to the wishes, and the pleasing associations of the minds of children, which shall lead them to rejoice in it as 'a delight,' while they regard it as 'the holy of the Lord, and honourable?'"

If these two be separated, it is comparatively easy to secure either the one or the other. It would not be difficult to mark out a course of exercises and instructions, which should fill up the entire day; or it would be very easy to show how the day might be rendered agreeable; but how to combine the two, is a point which requires much consideration, and which deserves all it requires.

There can be no doubt, that by a want of judicious proceeding, on the part of some parents and instructors of youth, the Sabbath has sometimes been made so entirely irksome to the youthful mind—has been so entirely filled up with exercises comparatively dry and uninteresting—that its approach has been regarded with dislike, and its continuance felt to be only a weariness. We admit that this arises from the fact that the “carnal mind,” even in youth and child-

is prescribed to children, or required of them, be not suited to their age and capacity, and if no pains be taken to make the study of inspired truth interesting to them, we are chargeable with proceeding in a manner which unnecessarily excites and aggravates this enmity. It must be confessed, that the system pursued in some families would weary even a spiritual-minded Christian. Can we be surprised that it is felt to be irksome by the minds of children, not yet brought savingly under the influence of the gospel, so as to have any relish for divine truth for its own sake? No one can look upon such a family, and the melancholy restraint which attends the whole of the Sabbath, without inquiring, Is this "the day which the Lord hath made, that we should rejoice and be glad in it?"

On the other hand, nothing can be more plain, even to a superficial observer, than the necessity of proceeding in some way,

which shall always mark the difference between the Sabbath and other days.

The amusements of the young must be discontinued, and their hilarity restrained, and they must be made to feel that, as on other days they are left at liberty to follow such pursuits as shall tend to fit them either to discharge the duties, or enjoy the mercies, of the present life; on this day, their thoughts are to be directed to another state, upon which they must soon enter, and for which they need a complete and divine preparation. Wo to the family, in which the opening of the Sabbath has nothing to distinguish it from the dawn of other days, but in which, lest the young should be disgusted with religion, the claims of God, and of eternity, are not pressed on them at all. How, then, shall we proceed, so as to combine the two? How shall we make the Sabbath sacred as the day of God, and yet give it a cheerful and inviting aspect? We reply—

1. *As much as possible, supersede, rather than forbid, what you wish to have avoided.*

Whatever there be in the employments of other days, to which the young might be inclined to turn aside on this day, but from which you desire to withdraw their attention, let it be studiously considered what can be best put in their place; how shall we fill up the day usefully and happily, so that the want of those things which would pass time away may not be felt? It will be well to have every thing put out of sight, on the evening of Saturday, which is likely to excite wishes that we desire to prevent, and thus the occasion of evil may be in a measure taken away; but even when that has been done, if there be nothing else provided, we know that, as surely as "nature abhors a vacuum," so surely will the young seek to fill up all unemployed time with what is injurious or unprofitable, if nothing better be systematically provided. It may be necessary,

therefore, for those who have the care of young persons, to have at least in their minds—though they need not make it known—some *plan* of proceeding, which shall embrace a sufficient number of objects, and variety of employments, for the various branches of the family, who look up to them for their guidance, so that by directing one to one pursuit, and another to another, no one may have time to think of choosing for himself what may afterwards have to be forbidden, nor be left in that unemployed, and therefore unhappy state of mind, which must naturally tend to evil.

2. *Make the devotions of the family not only holy and profitable, but interesting.*

And so let us induce our children to delight to take part in them. Let our selection of scripture, and of the remarks of any commentator, have a reference not merely to our own edification, but an adaptation to the

capacity, taste, and improvement, of all the members of our family who are likely to be present. And if we can with propriety assign a part to each elder child, and do this as a distinction and a privilege, a great and important point would be gained. Fathers who are engaged in business are sometimes obliged, or at least think they are obliged, by the pressure of other calls, to make the season of family devotion comparatively short; but on the Sabbath, happily free from the restraint and calls of business, they have more leisure to instruct and bless their household; and by this means a tone may be given to the whole family circle, which shall prove a salutary preparation for more public engagements.

3. Consider what number and kind of public services can be profitable to the minds of children.

They are generally fond of going to public services. If left to their own choice, they

will prefer filling up the entire day, and the evening too, in this manner; but it must be very evident, that from the general, and perhaps unavoidable character of public services, they are but partially calculated for the real improvement of those who are very young; and two services in the day, at the very farthest, are as many as they can be made to profit by. If they are taken to three services, there cannot be time for explaining and digesting what has been heard, nor can there be leisure for the employment of the more private, and equally important means of domestic instruction.

If, then, the *utile* and *dulce* are to be combined, there must not be a rapid and indiscriminate taking of children to public services; but there should be care in considering how far such services are in themselves advantageous, and what auxiliary means can be employed to increase their profitable tendency.

If public addresses and services were more adapted to the wants of the young, the case would be very different;*—but public services being what they are, it becomes every judicious parent and guardian of youth to consider well, before he gratifies fully that love of attending them, by which, in too many cases, the opportunity for more private instruction is lost, and its obligation evaded. Let us, then, try to follow up and simplify in private what has been heard and taken down in public, and do it in such a way as

* One cannot but deeply regret, that there are so few public services in the church of Christ, really adapted to the capacity of children. No one can, for instance, see a large number of Sunday-school children, penned up, as it were, in the house of God, manifesting by their listless, or perhaps disorderly manner, their want of sympathy in what is going forward, without perceiving that the effect will probably be, to produce a dislike of religion and of the sanctuary, rather than a respect for the one, and a cultivation of the other; nor without wishing that the great command, "Feed my lambs," found a more ready and general observance among the servants of the "Chief Shepherd."

shall give a fresh relish to divine truth, and induce the children to treasure up what they hear, in the hope of having it more fully explained to them at home.

4. *As to the interval of worship, or the time at the commencement and close of the day, let there be a happy medium observed.*

Requiring no more than with assiduity may be easily learnt, and using arguments which shall carry conviction with them, and make the heart to feel that there is reasonableness and propriety in the whole. There is such a variety of works in poetry and prose, that no one need be at a loss in selecting what will suit the age of each of his family, and it is well always to accompany the recited lesson with some little explanation, or an illustrative anecdote, if one can be remembered at the time; and as it is impossible that the attention can be kept up during the whole day, there should be a

season of unbending in an easy and quiet manner. Exercise in the open air in a retired situation will fit the mind for coming again, and with fresh energy, to profitable pursuits, and should not be withheld if it can possibly be given.

It has been suggested that a child of eight or ten years old may very profitably spend a part of the Lord's day in writing an exercise on some important portions of Scripture history, stating the facts, with their reasons and consequences, in his own words. This is noticed by Abbot in his Fire Side, (Chap. 2, Part 2,) and, as well as many other of his remarks, well deserves consideration. Whatever appeals to, and exercises the intellectual powers of children, will generally excite their interest, and may be made useful to them. If the evening of the day is devoted to domestic instruction, according to good old custom, it may be well to form the whole family into a Bible Class, and have a free and

unrestrained conversation on some selected portions of Scripture, inviting the remarks, and encouraging the inquiries of all: and there is scarcely any species of employment, which, in general, will be more acceptable or profitable to the young than this. •

The writer visited a church in Shropshire, in which the children of most of the members are accustomed to attend the Sabbath-school in the afternoon, and this plan has been found to be both pleasing and profitable. It is, however, very difficult, perhaps impossible, to lay down any rule, or suggest any plan, universally applicable. Circumstances vary with situations. All we are anxious for is, to direct attention to the subject; and if any of the numerous readers of the Evangelical Magazine can offer some additional suggestions as to the best and most profitable mode of proceeding, such remarks will be truly valuable and welcome.

Heads of families, or parents, will see that a practical attention to the subject requires much of careful thought and patient industry. No great and important good is to be secured without a considerable sacrifice of time and labour, and the end proposed in this instance is so great, that no truly enlightened mind will shrink from the effort on account of the self-denial it involves. Put this down among the many things for which you feel your insufficiency, but for which you are warranted and encouraged to seek the Divine help and guidance. If you lack this wisdom, ask it of God, and he will give it liberally.

You feel the greatness and difficulty of the work, and the insufficiency of all human means to secure the concurrence of the mind, or produce any saving effect on the heart. Of this you have often been reminded, as we have proceeded—but let it not produce any thing like despondency. Let us rather

go about our duty, feeling that there is a natural and established connexion between our employing the means God has ordained, and our securing the results he has promised. Very rarely will such a system of kind, cheerful, spiritual instruction as this, be pursued, without securing the good-will of the children, and producing benefits commensurate with eternity.

[The above excellent chapter is taken from the May number of the Evangelical Magazine, and is the production of the Rev. E. Crisp, Missionary to Madras.]

CONCLUSION.

Let me affectionately urge parents to act with *entire unanimity* in conducting the deeply interesting process of their children's education. This is vital to success. The husband and wife ought to proceed in this great matter as if only *one* soul dwelt in both. They must be *one* in their plans of instruction; *one* in their methods of government; *one* in their acts of chastisement; and *one* in their entreaties at a throne of grace. In this way only can they reasonably hope to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To every parent, anxious for the eternal happiness of his offspring, I would say, in the language of the wise man, "In the morning sow thy

seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."*

O parents! what a motive to right conduct is a rising family! Many into whose hands this brief volume may fall, may have but little of this world's good to bequeath to their children; but let me beseech them to leave for them the "inheritance of the good man,"†—the inheritance of an unsullied reputation,—the inheritance which justice, temperance, prudence, benevolence, and unaffected piety, never fail to confer.

You know not through what seas of trouble your dear children may be called to pass; you know not what they may be called to suffer from poverty, affliction, reproach, oppression, and the various ills to which flesh is heir; but, amidst all their struggles, and

amidst all the pensive and melancholy reflections to which they may give birth, let them never endure a moment's painful thought, in looking back to the parental home—let them never have occasion to blush at the recollection of a parent's name—let them never feel themselves less honoured, or less beloved, because they acknowledge you as the instruments of their earthly being.

Parents ! you must meet your children at the bar of God ! O see to it, that, so far as you are concerned, it may be a happy meeting ! What an honour it will be to be there recognized as the instruments of their salvation ! O how inexpressible the delight to find them partakers with you in the joy and triumph of that august day ! But, oh, how terrible is the thought of final separation from them, when the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened ! Let the consideration of your approaching meeting at the judgment-seat of Christ quicken all your

feelings of responsibility, and impart tenderness and fidelity to all your efforts to train up a generation for God.

My fervent prayer is, that this manual of domestic instruction and discipline, composed with an earnest desire to promote family religion, may be rendered an extensive blessing to many an anxious parent. I full well know the oppressive feeling of responsibility which steals over the heart of a parent, as he looks on the beaming countenances of his children, and thinks of their solemn destiny for time and eternity. But I also know, that the diligent use of appointed means, and the constant feeling of dependence on the promised blessing of a covenant-keeping God, are a never-failing source of relief from the broodings of a mind over-solicitous about the future.

Duty is ours, results are with God; but while we continue active, watchful, and

devout in the path of obedience, let us not doubt His promise who has said, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

THE END

